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A Sermon occasioned
by the death of Hon. Jabez
W. Huntington, U.S. Sena-
tor, by
Alvan Bond.





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Book 119 B7

SMITHSONIAN DEPOSIT

The Course and Consummation of Life.

A SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

HON. JABEZ W. HUNTINGTON,

UNITED STATES SENATOR,

WHO DIED IN NORWICH NOV. 2, 1847,

AGED 80 YEARS.

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BY ALVAN BOND, D. D.

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PASTOR OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.  
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SERMON.

2. TIMOTHY, 4: 7.

I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE.

THIS announcement forms a part of the spirited and expressive passage, in which the Apostle gives utterance to his feelings in view of the near approach of death. His life, after his conversion, had been devoted to the service of his Lord, and being about to resign the commission of apostleship, he exclaims, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

The clause selected as the text, represents the christian life as a race. The word, translated *course*, was borrowed from the common language employed in speaking of the Grecian games, and has reference to a *race-course* run by the competitors for the prize. The word *finish*, when used with reference to a course or race, does not mean simply to *terminate*, but *successfully to complete*, so as to win the prize of the victor. "I have finished my course," i. e. I have run successfully the christian race, and with cheerful confidence I look for the crown of righteousness laid up for me.

The passage thus explained, suggests for consideration the *course*, and the *consummation* of christian life.

I. With a view to illustrate the course of life, several particulars claim our consideration. The course of life is one of *laborious activity*. It is evident both from the

physical and mental constitution of man, that he was designed by the Creator for activity. Hence he is placed in a condition, where active labors are necessary. The established laws of activity require obedience, and their violation is sure to be followed with a recompense of suffering. One of the earliest communications, made to man after the apostacy, was the decree, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." The Creator might have so constituted the laws of nature, that the means of subsistence would be produced spontaneously. But he has not seen fit to relieve mankind from the necessity of active and diligent labor.

The idea of labor is not restricted to mere physical effort—to the work of the hands. Mind is constituted for activity, and without it human exertion would avail no more, than is accomplished by the animal races under the general laws of instinct. The relation between mental and physical labor is evident to any reflecting mind. In the civil and social structure of society there are such mutual relations and dependencies, as require in some a preponderance of mental effort, and in others a preponderance of physical effort: while in all a certain amount of both kinds of activity is necessary to the healthful development of the whole man.

It was not designed by the Creator, that the human race should all be occupied in the same pursuits. Society, as it is organized, makes it necessary, that there should be a diversity of operation both in the intellectual and the material kingdom. And so far as the diversified labors of mind and body are properly directed, they work out useful and harmonious results.

It is evidently the design of the all wise Creator, that

mankind should continue to obey the permanent law of activity in some useful department of labor, so long as the active powers of our nature retain the capacity for exertion. Indolence is an abuse of the human powers, that cannot be indulged with impunity. Whatever be the circumstances of life, no one can be justified in suffering his active powers to rust into imbecility through the neglect of appropriate exertion.

The life of Christ was one of untiring activity. "He went about doing good." None of his time was suffered to pass unimproved. He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day." His example was one of diligence in doing good. The life of Paul was one of unceasing and laborious activity, till he finished his course. Holy men and useful men have always been active, laborious men. In the present state of things where so much needs to be done for ourselves and for others, it becomes our imperious duty to be diligent in business in the allotted sphere of occupation.

Thus the course of life, be it shorter or longer, is pursued amidst cares and labors, from which there is no relief, till we are summoned to give account of our stewardship. Though the necessity thus imposed, may sometimes seem to be stern and painful, yet the penalty of violation will involve far greater inconveniences. Heaven's decree will remain unrepealed and unchanged, in its requisition of laborious activity in pursuing the course of life.

The course of life is attended with *conflicts*. There is a law in the members, warring against the law of the mind—an element of adverse power, that is in conflict with the decisions of conscience and the influences of grace. The interior elements of moral disorder, consisting

of the depraved desires and passions, exert an influence, the invariable tendency of which is from evil to evil.— They appear among the earliest developements of our moral nature, and are strengthened by indulgence. In consequence of a general neglect to apply the appropriate restraints in early life, they acquire a power, which gives them a disastrous ascendancy over the sober decisions of the judgment. The weakness of moral virtue is sadly demonstrated, when it comes in conflict with the law of sin.

The difficulty of establishing and maintaining self-government is noticed in the instructions of revelation, and recognized by general experience. We find in the scriptures such counsels as the following ; “ Keep thy heart with all diligence ”—“ He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls ”—“ He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.” Such counsels point to a conflict, to maintain which requires firmness, vigilance and prayer. How many can sympathise with the experience of Paul, described by him with such graphic and masterly power in the Epistle to the Romans. How many have been ready to respond his language, “ When I would do good, evil is present with me.” So sharp is this conflict with the warring elements of the sinful heart, that it often prompts the impassioned language of the apostle, “ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death !”

The depraved susceptibilities of man's moral nature afford fearful advantage to the assaults of temptation, made by those mysterious spirits of wickedness, concerning whose malignant agency the scriptures utter so many admonitions. The apostle alludes to the conflict, which the

christian has to maintain with super-human powers of evil, when he says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places?" The fact is thus fully and strongly stated, that we have enemies to battle with far more potent than any human hostilities, a conflict that must be sustained with resolute purpose, with persevering activity, and with sleepless vigilance.

When we estimate the strength of the lusts, passions, and sinful affections, and the power of those spiritual agents of evil, which traverse unseen the moral world, seeking whom they may deceive and destroy, we may comprehend the nature and severity of the moral conflicts, that occupy so large a space in the history of life's eventful course.—The assaults of temptation are artfully adapted to the character, the condition, and the peculiar circumstances of those assailed. To maintain a war with these varied forms of evil, to resist every species of temptation, requires strenuous and unceasing exertion.

Such are the conflicts of human probation, which make its pilgrimage anxious, perilous, and laborious. When Paul uttered the words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course," he could rejoice in the happy thought, that the keen conflicts he had endured with indwelling sin, and with the invisible agencies of temptation, were ended, and that the awards of victory awaited him. Such is the course of life with every christian. Hence the solemn summons, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

The course of life is one of *responsibilities*. We are so connected with fellow pilgrims to the eternal world, that

we exert a mutual influence on each others character and destiny. "None of us liveth to himself." We are not isolated beings, whose actions affect only ourselves. The claims of others upon us involve responsibilities, varied by the circumstances of the position assigned us. Much depends, as it respects the measure of individual responsibilities, on the position allotted, and the number of talents delivered to us in the providence of God.

Were we to contemplate this point in its true light, the conviction would be deep and strong, that it is a serious thing to live, where the doings of life are moulding the eternal destinies of ourselves and others. Wherever we stay, and whithersoever we go, the influence of our character is leaving on those with whom we are connected, an impression of good or of evil, that shall be as lasting as eternity.—A righteous Abel, "being dead, yet speaketh." Of a worldly minded Achan it is affirmed, "that man perished not alone in his iniquity."

Were no one but the individual himself to be affected by the manner, in which the course of life is pursued, even then there would be involved a serious degree of responsibility, arising from the relation of present conduct with the destinies of immortality. But when it is considered, how others may be affected by the example and influence of the individual, his responsibility assumes an aspect, that ought to awaken the deepest solicitude. God will hold each one of us accountable for whatsoever we do, in performing life's eventful course: and when the summons is issued, "Give account of thy stewardship," then and not before shall we comprehend the nature of the responsibility, under which the course of probation is pursued.

The relations sustained by us, as subjects of the divine

government, involve duties and responsibilities of the gravest character. They cannot be disregarded without periling not only our own eternal well-being, but that of fellow pilgrims. To fulfil the duties involved in such relations, both as it respects ourselves, and those with whom we are associated,—and to meet also the claims of God, who holds our destinies in his hand, will require unceasing vigilance, self-denial, activity, and prayer. The field of probation will in the future world yield a harvest, corresponding with the seed, which is now sowed, and the kind of labor bestowed on its culture. The mysterious destinies of a future and endless existence are so connected with present conduct during the course of life, as makes the history of each day's doings and conflicts solemn and eventful.

The course of life is one of AFFLICTIONS. There is no condition, in which we can expect exemption from the visitations of trial. The mysteries of Providence often subject our faith to a severe ordeal. The clearest skies may be suddenly overcast with clouds. When we flatter ourselves that the voyage of life will carry us over unruffled seas, the pleasing dream may at any time be disturbed by the elements of adversity, as they muster themselves for a tempest. Often does Providence utter its monitory summons, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest." Amidst changes sudden and sorrowful we feel the force of the divine announcement,—“Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.” God in his sovereignty often speaks from the midst of the clouds and darkness, which are round his throne, saying,—“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.”

The counsels of inspiration utter a rebuke of the prevailing presumption, that fills the future with pleasing hopes. We are slow to learn practically the truth, that we know not what a day may bring forth. Not being sufficiently mindful of the mutability that pertains to human affairs, to earthly prospects and circumstances, we find ourselves unprepared to meet the painful vicissitudes, which sometimes come upon us with overwhelming power. As his waves and billows pass over us, we feel the need of stronger faith, than we have been careful to acquire. In vain we try to fathom the deep designs of God, to solve the mystery of his ways,—and it remains for us to listen with resignation to the message of a chastening Father,—“Be still, and know that I am God.”

The painful mysteries of Providence are designed and fitted as a salutary trial of religious faith. This is an element of character, which God would perfect in his children, and he accordingly subjects them to the appropriate discipline. He has a variety of methods, in which to make his providential doings so bear on his children, as to develop the qualities, in which he delights, and prepare them for that rest, to which he intends to bring them.

The fashion of this world passeth away, and the tides of change no human wisdom can ascertain, or comprehend. Events, which in a day or an hour may destroy our fondest earthly hopes, come without any premonitory indications. No scene of happiness is protected by such defenses, as can ward off the visitations of affliction. The seeds of suffering and of death are lodged in every mortal body, and may suddenly mature amidst keen and unrelieved sufferings unto dissolution. Life's fairest scenes are often swept by the tempest of adversity, and our pleasant things are laid

waste. Pestilence, in its walks of darkness, holds a commission to destroy the hope of man. It fastens its ruthless gripe on the form of manliness and vigor, and in a few days or hours compels its return to dust. It is not an uncommon thing to have our attention suddenly startled, and our sympathies excited by the onset of the grim Destroyer, as he invades the hallowed home of domestic joys and hopes, and there sunders the tenderest social ties, leaving behind him the foot-prints of irreparable desolation.

What is the world but "a vale of tears"—a wilderness of storms, where the spirit is often wounded by the thorns of adversity. Who has not shared in the bitter sorrows of bereavement? Where is the habitation, that has long been occupied without having been visited with sickness, anxiety, suffering, and bereavement? The congregation exhibits the habiliments of mourning, and you may find in it hearts that ache under some fresh affliction. No relation is privileged with exemption from the power of this universal destroyer. He goes up into the windows of domestic happiness, and sunders the sacred tie, that unites the "twain" in "one flesh"; and departing with his precious victim, leaves the bereaved survivor in unrelieved loneliness, to weep in bitterness over the cherished memory of the loved companion. O what depths of sorrow may be found in the "torn heart" of widowhood! None but those, who have passed through the scene, can understand the nature of those griefs experienced, when hearts, united by the tenderest of all earthly affections, are rent asunder, and left to bleed in unutterable desolation. When the confined remains of the endeared one are lowered down slowly and silently into the narrow house, none can conceive, what is the anguish of that smothered sigh, which heaves the con-

vulsed bosom, unless there has been experienced a similar bereavement.

How common and how agonizing the separation between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, when death invades the family group. The guides of our youth, the companions of our life, the props of our declining years are removed one after another. The parental heart is smitten and crushed, when some promising flower is uprooted from the garden of life's fond hopes, and in its freshness and beauty withered by the frost of death. When the joy of our heart is thus quenched, and our hopes destroyed, there comes from the scene of sorrow Heaven's instructive message,—“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of.”

Who has not by personal experience learned, that the course of life is one of trials and afflictions, where we have to encounter repeatedly the inexplicable mysteries of Providence? Who is not aware, that we are liable at any time to be overtaken by the waves of a heart-rending affliction? How deep the mysteries, that try our faith,—mysteries which the plummet of reason cannot sound. There is no earthly hope, that may not any day be destroyed. School-ed amidst scenes of suffering, and sorrow, and mystery, we learn by sad experience, that we have no permanent sources of temporal happiness,—no continuing city in a wilderness,—no rest for the soul this side of heaven. The course of life must be *finished*, before its trials shall be ended.

II. The Apostle said, I have finished my course. What is the *consummation* to which he referred? This is my second general topic. When Paul uttered this language, he could exult in the prospect, that his great work had been accomplished. His course of labor, of conflict, of res-

possibleness, of trial, being finished, he was now ready to be offered. The term *finish*, as has been already noticed, conveys a two-fold idea, viz : a *completion* of the race, and the consequent *investment* with the honors of a victor.

When the course of life is finished in this important sense, the results are most precious and glorious. As the journey of life approaches its end, if finished in the sense just noticed, there is great *peace*, arising from humble *trust* in Christ. A very great difference is seen in the manner, in which men meet the crisis of their ending probation. They, who during life have run for the golden prizes of this world, and its awards of pleasure, dread the crisis of termination. To *end* the course of life is one thing,—to *finish* it is a different thing. Its end may come, before its great object is attained ; but when its course is finished, this object is secured. As the Apostle, standing on the margin of eternity, reviewed the history of the past, he was cheered and animated with the reflection, that his eventful course had been *so* finished, that nothing more remained for him to do, but to resign himself into the arms of death with the confidence, that could exclaim, “ I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

How blessed such an issue,—and such in every case is the issue of a well-spent life. “ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” The prospect of immediate death is fitted to appal the stoutest heart. Nothing is so much dreaded or deprecated as the ruthless assault of the king of terrors. In view of such a change there is much, that is fitted to agitate the mind. Well may it awaken anxiety and awe. The im-

mortal spirit, whose first love is with the things of this life, shudders at the prospect of entering upon the untried scenes of an eternal futurity. But there is a power in christian faith, that inspires the soul with peace, as it contemplates the fearful conflict. The reason is, that the end of life has been a subject of habitual thought, with reference to which the leading purposes of the mind have been formed.

The man who has often communed with the grave and the realities beyond it, who has habitually reflected on the approaching end of all things, and prepared himself to meet it, calmly awaits the solemn hour, when the last summons shall call him to eternity. When it comes, it finds him ready. As he finds himself enveloped in the darkness of death's mysterious night, with firm confidence he exclaims, "I have finished my course." As the star of hope, shining through that darkness, attracts the eye of his faith, he is inspired with courage, saying, "I will fear no evil." The scene around his dying bed may be one of agitation and grief, exhibited by weeping friends, who would hold him back from the gate of heaven; but his own calm, courageous spirit meets the crisis unterrified. He has finished his course, and is going to receive his crown.

The inquiry may be suggested, what kind of peace is it, that marks the closing scene of the christian's course? In reply I may say, it is not the sullen apathy of the stoic, who has schooled himself into a frigid insensibility both to good and evil. Nor is it the deceitful repose, created by the moral opiates of specious error, which prophecies smooth things, inspiring the deceived soul with dreamless slumbers and groundless hopes. Nor is it a nervous ecstasy, occasioned by causes of a physiological rather than a

moral nature, and which the first ray of light from the eternal world will expose and destroy. It is that heavenly peace, which Jesus promised to his disciples, and which it is his pleasure to give them. "Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto *you*." This is the precious blessing, which the christian enjoys, when he has finished his course. Having walked in his uprightness with unfaltering step, "he shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds."

The consummation of christian life is not only followed with peace, but with a glorious *triumph*. Human prowess glories in its victories, and they are heralded through the world by the genius of poetry, and the glowing pages of the journalist and historian. Science and art exult in their marvelous triumphs, which are chronicled, and lauded in the temple of literary fame. Secular enterprise trumpets its proud achievements, as it rears its monuments of glory and grandeur.

But what are all such triumphs, compared with that, gained by the man of God, who having kept his end in view, is enabled to meet death as a vanquished foe. As he takes a retrospect of the past, and thinks of his labors, his conflicts, his responsibilities, and his trials, he may rejoice in the reflection, that they are ended, and that he has finished his course.

The triumphs of faith, though without the pomp of artificial circumstance, infinitely surpass in moral greatness, all other victories, however emblazoned by human pride and enthusiasm. It is a triumph of the immortal spirit, achieved on the pilgrimage of an eventful probation amidst toils and difficulties, which nothing but faith can successfully encounter. Tell me not of the victories of the martial hero in the fiercely contested battle; or of the achieve-

ments of the man of genius, the man of talent, or the man of worldly enterprise. What though fame may celebrate these exploits in eulogy and in song, they are destined to a grave of forgetfulness. The splendid pageant with its gorgeous glories will vanish like the meteor's transient blaze, and leave behind nothing of enduring value or interest. The sounds of commotion like the thunders of the storm, will soon die away, and be heard no more forever. But the christian hero, who has fought the good fight, and finished his course successfully, achieves a victory, that shall be celebrated amidst the congratulations and rejoicings of the heavenly kingdom, and be rewarded with a crown of immortal honor.

The consummation of the course of life, as attained by the christian, is accompanied with hopes of unearthly glory. O what prospects open to the spirit's unclouded vision, as it takes its leave of the mortal body, and bids adieu to earth. Excited by curiosity men are attracted by the collision and conflict of physical forces. There is an impressive sublimity in the mighty struggle of nature's conflicting elements, as witnessed in the storm, the earthquake, the volcano. The conflict of brute forces has its excitements. The battle-shock of armies is watched with thrilling,—with stunning emotion. But how much greater the interest, attending the scene, where the christian engages in the stern encounter with death. Single handed, but having on the armor of God, and sustained by the power of faith, he awaits the onset of the dread destroyer with the shout of confidence, "O death where is thy sting!" The darkness, which for a little season gathers around the opening grave, is illumed by the sunshine of heaven, which bursts in sweet serenity on the eye of the triumphant be-

liever, as his redeemed and sanctified spirit ascends to its resting place in the bosom of a Savior's love.

There is in such a triumph as this, calm and noiseless as it is, a moral sublimity infinitely surpassing the so called brilliant achievements of worldly ambition, and human enterprise. O who would not rather be the humble victor in life's last conflict, and sympathise with Paul in the announcement, "I have finished my course",—than to win the most honorable prize of human glory, that the world has ever awarded to the men it delighteth to honor. Let any one witness the scene, where the good man meets the last enemy in the closing conflict of his course, and though he might have millions at his command,—and be invested with the coveted honors of rank, and office, and authority, he could not well resist the conviction, that the peace and hope of the righteous in death, were a far richer inheritance. He would be prompted to utter the prayer of the Moabite seer,—“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

Such is a brief survey of the course and consummation of christian life. The subject will obviously suggest the reason, why so much is said in the gospel respecting the necessity of diligence, patience, firmness and untiring perseverance. The reason will occur wily, in order to pursue, and finish the course of christian life, there must be faith, watchfulness, and prayer. It will be obvious, that the Apostle has uttered the counsel of true wisdom, when addressing his christian brethren, as pursuing with this course, he said, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” Thus to live and thus to die, is life's magnificent consummation.

In view of the whole subject, as now contemplated, let me in conclusion select from the practical instructions it suggests a single consideration,—*the consolation it affords, when bereaved of christian friends.* Such bereavements are often visited upon us in this world of death. The visitation may be one, that not only deeply and painfully afflicts individuals and families, but one that falls heavily upon the church, the community, the nation. The life of a good man is of unspeakable value not only to those, allied to him by kindred relations, but to the world. Mourn we may, when such a man is summoned from a sphere of usefulness in the church, in the community, and in our country.

The solemn providence, that has just removed from us a distinguished citizen—a friend and brother, in the person of the HONORABLE JABEZ W. HUNTINGTON,* calls us to mourn on our own account, while we mingle our sympathies with these smitten friends, who drink so deeply the cup of sorrow. The position he occupied, not only in the church as a steadfast and consistent follower of Christ, but as a public man in a highly responsible office, demands the tribute of our public sympathy, and a public notice. In whatever relation we contemplate his character,

*Mr. Huntington was the younger son of *General Zechariah Huntington*, of this town, who survives to mourn the recent bereavement. He was born in November 1788. In the year 1806 he was graduated at Yale College. Subsequently he pursued the study of law at the law school in Littlefield, where he was established in his profession. In the year 1821 he was elected a member of Congress, and was re-elected to the same office for two terms following. In the year 1831 he was appointed one of the associate judges of the Supreme Court, and on assuming the duties of this appointment, he resigned his seat in Congress, and removed to Norwich. He was appointed in 1840 to fill the vacancy in the United States Senate, occasioned by the death of the Hon. Theodore Tilton. In the year 1845 he was re-elected to the same office for the term of six years.

we shall, I doubt not, with singular unanimity concede to him the honor and merit due to private virtue, and public worth.

As a husband, as a son, as a brother, they who knew him in these relations, will find his eulogy written in living characters on the tablet of faithful memory. Neither the engrossing labors of public life, nor the distinguished honors, conferred on him by his fellow citizens, were suffered to check in the least the ardor of his strong domestic affections, or interfere with those tender and delicate attentions which he cheerfully and uniformly bestowed on the bereaved friends, who shared the first place in his heart. The first place, did I say? No—his chosen Redeemer occupied the supremacy in his affections, and this but enhanced the value and strength of his friendship and love, and added to his character its crowning excellence.

We might gather testimony to the high moral worth of his character from the manner, in which for many years he fulfilled the duties of the laborious and responsible offices, to which he was at different times elected. In his professional labors he acquitted himself with an ability and fidelity, that secured to him distinguished reputation. But he was best known, and most highly appreciated as a public character. His fellow citizens in repeated instances testified, that they had the highest confidence in his qualifications to fill the most important offices, within their gift.

As a member of Congress the stand he took, the manly course he pursued, and the devotion he manifested to his country, indicated the talent, judgment and patriotism, which have secured for him the enviable reputation of a high-souled, and gifted statesman. The career of public

life commenced by him under flattering auspices, and pursued in a spirit of devotion to the public interests, like the rising light shone brighter and brighter, till he finished his course.

As the impartial and upright Judge he has left a reputation honorable to the department, to which his talents and acquirements for several years were devoted. The ability and fidelity, with which he has acquitted himself in the responsible office he held at the time of his decease, evince the value of the services rendered to his country. That the prosperity of his native State, that the good of his country, were objects very dear to him, will be evident, not merely from his professions, but from the unwearied industry, and anxious labor, with which he has fulfilled the high and honorable trusts committed to him.

As a public man he has exhibited a character, marked for consistency, honesty, and integrity. He had adopted his principles, and he stood firmly by them. And however some might differ with him on certain points of national policy, all will concede to him honesty of purpose, and that high-mindedness, which becomes a statesman. The confidence reposed in him, and the respect entertained for him by the illustrious associations, with whom he was associated in the national government, are honorable testimonials to the high consideration in which he was held. Despising the truckling policy of the political intriguer, he adhered to the principles of his election, and from a conscientious regard to what he considered to be the claims of God and the laurels of his country, he pursued openly and bravely a straight forward course, and left the issue to that, in whose wisdom and providence he exercised confident confidence.

“Thus he stood in his integrity, just and firm of purpose,
Aiding many, fearing none, a spectacle to angels and to men :
Yea, when the shattered globe shall rock in the throes of dissolution,
Still, will he stand in his integrity, sublime—an honest man.”

There is no sphere, in which our departed friend moved, where his character was exhibited in a light so satisfactory and interesting, as in that of an humble follower of Christ. This is the character, in which I knew him best. Having communed with him in private respecting the paramount interests of religion, it was delightful to see, that amidst the diverting avocations and temptations of a public life, religion was enthroned in his heart. I have been with him in the halls of his official duties, amidst the absorbing engagements and excitements of public life, and it gives me peculiar satisfaction to refer, as I now may, to the consistency, the sincerity, and the unfaltering firmness of religious principle, which he exemplified under these circumstances. He was among the few, who during the sessions of Congress, were in the habit of holding occasional meetings for prayer. Sensible of the solemn responsibilities imposed on him in his high official station, he was in the constant habit of seeking strength and wisdom at the foot of the cross, where he left his spiritual burdens, and civil honors.

It has been his conviction for some time past, that he was soon to finish his course ; and he has repeatedly alluded to this conviction in conversation with his more intimate friends. Of late it has been manifest from his peculiar interest in religious duties, and the unwonted fervor of his prayers, that his christian character was fast ripening for the crisis, he has so suddenly and triumphantly met.—When this crisis came, he viewed it with the calmness and confidence of one, who had made preparation for its coming.

He has finished his course, and left us forever. In the midst of usefulness and honor he has gone to his rest, to engage in higher services, and participate in nobler joys, than earth afforded.

“As the apple is green and well liking, till the best summer of its age,
And then halloweth out its golden bells to mingle glory with corruption;
As a meteor reveleth in splendor, but bursteth in dazzling light;
Such was the end of the righteous: his death was the sun at his setting.”

God, in this providence, has spoken to us all, and loudly does he say—“Do with thy might, what thy hand findeth to do.”—“Walk while ye have the light, for the night soon cometh.”—In the friend who has been taken away, were treasured the most cherished earthly hopes of his bereaved family;—while many others were relying much on his influence in his *official* capacity, in the existing crisis of our country's affairs. As a church we shared deeply in his sympathies and prayers, as a community we were depending on him for years of valuable service. In the midst of these anticipations and hopes, a voice from heaven breaks on our ear,—“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”

Thus are you admonished, that the course of life will soon be ended. How shall it end? Are you living with its end in view,—so living that you will be able at last to exclaim with confidence,—“I have finished my course?” Ye followers of Christ, a brother's seat in this sanctuary, and at the sacramental table henceforth will be vacant: and from that vacancy there comes a voiceless monition,—yea from that brother's fresh opened grave there comes the monitory response, “be ye also ready.”

Ye men of business, amidst your absorbing pursuits, your

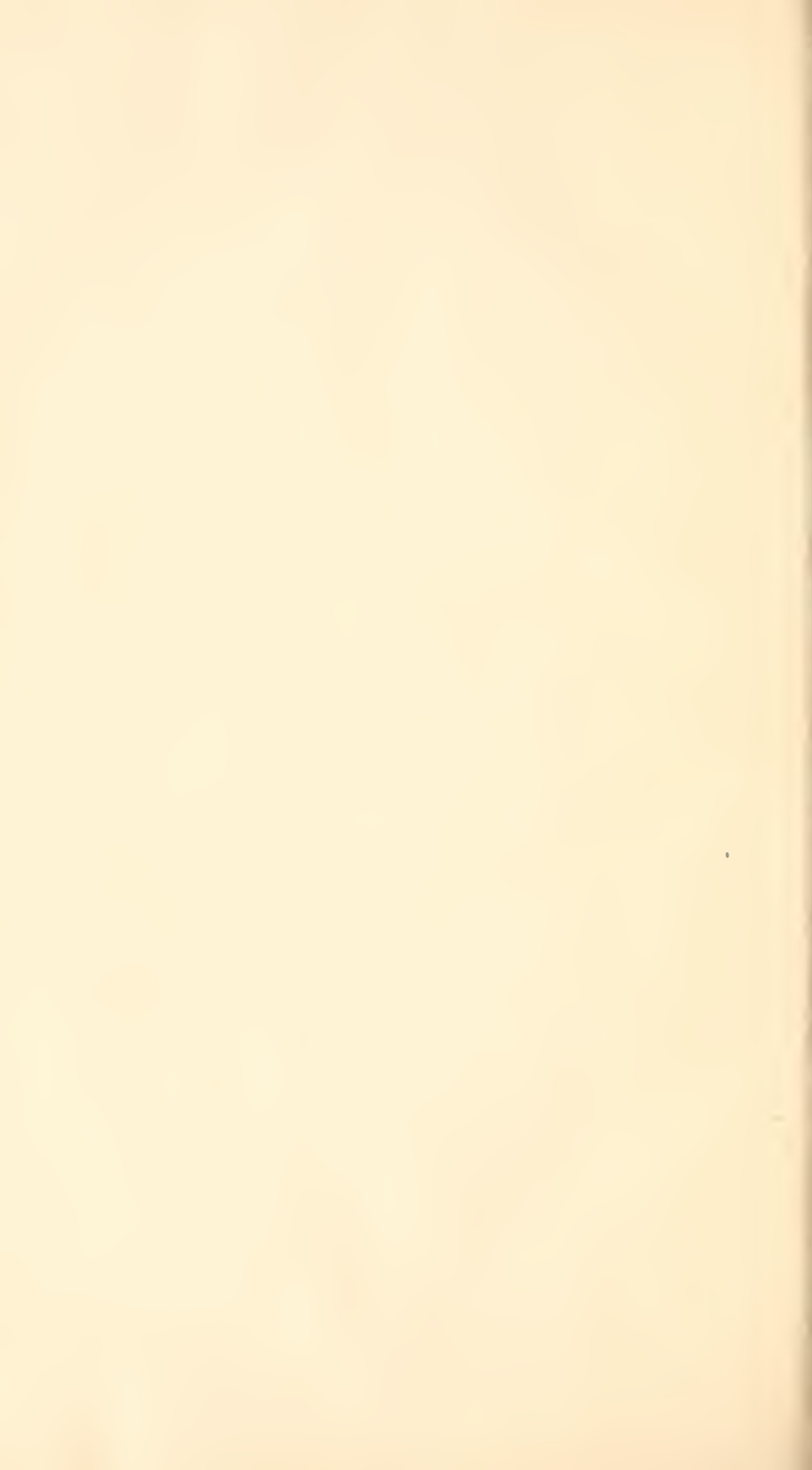
pleasures, anticipations, and honors, you are addressed in the solemn and significant language of mysterious providence, and warned to be prepared to meet your God. The voice of him, whose sudden death has called forth so strong a tide of sympathy, could it be heard from the spirit-world, would with argument and eloquence appeal to you to seek first the kingdom of God. Your course of life will soon have ended; perhaps very soon. "For what is your life?—it is even a vapor." Before another Sabbath shall dawn, the solemn knell may announce your departure. Soon and your choicest friendships, your treasured riches, your well earned honors, will avail you no more forever.

Would you finish your course so as to attain the conqueror's crown, then open your hearts to the instruction, which Heaven in a voice of sudden thunder addresses to you, and which exhorts you to seek in the way of repentance that refuge for the soul, which you may find in the hope of the gospel! Be wise to-day, and so improve the impressive monition, to which your attention is summoned, that when the fearful crisis of your soul's destiny shall come, it may find you ready,—your loins girt about, and your lamps trimmed and burning. To be ready, when this crisis comes,—“ready to be offered,”—is the blessed consummation of life.

As you prize the treasures of a glorious immortality, as you would have your house set in order, when death shall come and demand admission, as you would finish life's course with hope and triumph, call away your thoughts from things seen and temporal, and give earnest and immediate attention to the things which belong to your peace.—While the tears of sympathy, shed upon the grave of our endeared and honored friend, are yet moist, and the affect-

ing instruction of his dying scene is yet fresh,—let the momentous decision be recorded on high, that your first work shall be a full and cheerful surrender of heart and life to the service of that God, whose providence warns, whose word counsels, and whose love beseeches you to make his favor and glory the paramount objects of pursuit. May you so listen to the appeals he is addressing to you, that in prospect of the last dread crisis, you may respond the language of exulting confidence. “I have fought the good fight, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE.”

AMEN.



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